

INTEGRITY

ie 1954



Mercy

C O N T E N T S

June 1954, Vol. 8, No. 9

EDITORIAL	- - - - -	1
A DOCTOR PRACTICES MERCY		
By PATRICIA A. CARTER, M.D.	- - - - -	2
MERCY FOR SINNERS		
By GEORGE H. TAVARD, A.A.	- - - - -	11
WITHOUT MERCY		
By JEREM O'SULLIVAN-BARRA	- - - - -	18
CHRIST'S MERCIFUL INDWELLING		
By CARYLL HOUSELANDER	- - - - -	27
DIVINE MERCY		
By HERBERT THOMAS SCHWARTZ	- - - - -	32
BOOK REVIEWS	- - - - -	40

INTEGRITY is published by lay Catholics and dedicated to the task of discovering the new synthesis of RELIGION and LIFE for our times

Published monthly by Integrity Publishing Co., Inc., 157 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y., MU-5-8125. Edited by Dorothy Dohen. Re-entered as Second Class Matter May 11, 1950 at the Post Office in New York, N. Y. under the Act of March 3, 1879. All single copies 25¢ each; yearly subscriptions: Domestic \$3.00, Canadian \$3.50, Foreign \$4.00.

INTEGRITY indexed in *THE CATHOLIC PERIODICAL INDEX*

EDITORIAL



MERCY is a much distorted virtue. In the name of mercy flagrant violations of the moral law are suggested. In the name of mercy sentimentality is allowed to have full sway. Yet mercy is so fundamental to Christianity (do we not say that "The mercy of God is above all His works"?) that we think it extremely important to have an issue on mercy in modern life.

A girl comes out of a movie—a war film which depicts in a heart-rending way the heavy casualties among the youthful participants—and her companion remarks to her, "Wasn't that moving?" She replies, "No. There would have to be a dog being killed to make me cry." Heartless? Yes. A typical remark? More typical probably than we'd like to admit. For in our times, with the increase in human misery, there seems to be a corresponding hardening of hearts. For small griefs, no. We fall for soap operas and job stories; we are moved if Santa Claus disappoints a little child. But who is there to weep at the terrible needs of men?

Perhaps the trouble is that the desperate needs—of war victims, of refugees, of slave laborers—are beyond our imagining. A wounded dog, a child in tears, can stir our sympathies, but the tale of sixty thousand people wiped out by an atom bomb, or a report of the two hundred thousand homeless in the city of Bombay, leaves us cold. It is too much for us to fathom, it blunts rather than evokes an emotional response. And since most of our living is on an emotional level, we do not respond at all.

Mercy, of course, is not primarily dependent on emotions. It is charity under the aspect of need. It is love going out to meet the needs of the person loved. For the Christian, love has no limits: it extends to everyone, and so, as a consequence, does mercy.

The truly merciful man is fixed in God as his center; his mercy radiates, grows in ever-wider circles, but never departs from God, its central point. For when it does, mercy becomes a dangerous thing. The mercy of mercy-killing, for instance, is the mercy of the man of compassionate feeling who is not fixed in God. But let not Christians throw the first stone at him until we search our own hearts for a response to human suffering, lest we misuse the certainty of our faith as an excuse to evade the needs of men.

* * *

Subscribers—please send us your summer addresses.

THE EDITOR

A Doctor Practices Mercy

IN our issue on *Vocations of Service*, Doctor Carter had an article that was immensely popular. We are especially happy about the second article since it reflects the compassionate understanding of pain, combined with unswerving devotion to the moral law, which should mark the Christian doctor.

It is late at night, almost morning, and weary and tired though I am, nothing can put off taking stock, it's been that kind of day. It is a wonderful privilege to be allowed to minister to the sick—those who are gravely ill or those who have a minor skirmish with pain and suffering; to a doctor these are our jewels—those who need us and whatever proficiency and skill we can exercise.

But this business of practicing medicine is not all joy and triumph and elation. We go down in defeat many times. We know often we have done our best but it just hasn't been good enough. Fight, and fight again, just to keep life. That is what every heartbeat of a physician says if he is a true laborer in the vineyard. Lots of times people say, "Doctor, what a wonderful vocation you have, always helping others." Little do they know the frequency with which we have to acknowledge despite all our wonder drugs and technical advances and magnificent discoveries that we are powerless to halt the erosion of illness.

cancer

Take today, take any day of any year. A young, fresh, lovely girl is stricken by a wasting disease, a tumor, a malignant growth that threatens to snuff out her life, no matter how we fight the imperious monster; to all our best knowledge we can scarcely keep up with its ravage. She becomes pregnant then and another strain is put on her weakened physical reserves—a strain that would be unappreciable and transitory if she were well and healthy. Just think of this girl and what she must accept—a life sorely compromised by profound disorder—a plan of treatment which if any attempt is made to arrest the progress of the lawless overgrowth, must be of the most radical variety—she will lose the affected arm. She has the hope however of arresting the disease now if this is done. It will be difficult for her to have a new baby

Patricia A. Carter, M.D.

—and only one hand to cradle and dry and water with. I can't help wishing God hadn't blessed her with another youngster (she has three) just now—but He has.

In a few hours I must tell her the whole story, and her husband. We Catholic physicians and patients have a wonderful gift in our faith, but living it and dosing it out when the other fellow must take the heavy bottom of the glass residue isn't appetizing, despite our belief and sure knowledge that if we do what God wills right will eventually triumph. These are the cases which are hardest of all to manage. To cut or wound or burn in order to save, that is gratefully and knowingly undertaken. But to have to give a bitter pill without too much hope of cure is always difficult. Sooner or later I know that other constituted medical authorities will be in on the team we shall organize to fight this girl's battle. I shall go far and wide and try to assemble all their specialized skills against the enemy cancer. Like men of science they will correctly assess the situation in terms of known factors. They will know that youth is our friend, that her present degree of sound physical well-being is in her favor. In concert we shall test the strength of all the bodily systems—heart, lungs, the digestive apparatus, the generative system—and here on this last will arise many painful contentions.

what shall I say?

In spite of the weariness I can hear it all now, I must hear it now and pray God I shall be able to present truth honestly and professionally in an acceptable form. We'll all be gathered there and I shall be acutely aware, more than all the rest, of the youngness and the goodness and the worthiness of the patient since I know her well and her husband and her three youngsters whom I have brought into the world. One by one the points in favor will be cited and likewise the unfavorable, and most glaring will be the presence of pregnancy, complicated as it is by the disease. "Certainly, Doctor, you don't intend to allow this girl to continue her pregnancy in the face of well-known and substantial reports of the exaggeration of her disease that may result? Pregnancy is certainly a hindrance, Doctor, and after all she has offspring already. It will be impossible for her, my friend, with one arm and most of her shoulder gone. Understand, Doctor, we respect your religious beliefs, we think everyone ought to follow any creed he chooses, but this is not religion, this is medicine" and so on.

I shall reply to these resentful but well-intentioned queries that I am for all that medical science can offer—except that which disregards moral law. I shall say that religion is not a part of my brief but morality—the acceptance of the obligation to be ethical toward God and man, and that abortion is a violation of such ethical conduct. I won't say it with elation or even consolation, despite the fact that I believe in the right to live of the unborn fetus, but I must voice my conviction. There will be much sad headshaking, much hidden and overt indication that I would really be an excellent clinician if it weren't for this unyielding stubborn adherence to ecclesiastical inhibitions. This exercise with the team won't concern me half as much as my encounter with the victim and those who love her.

abortion?

I must be honest but considerate, I must let her know the seriousness of her disorder, enlist her absolute co-operation. She must fight with us. The pain that is ahead, the hours and days without end must be measured and considered and prepared for consciously and prayerfully. She must realize that the treatment is extreme and radical but necessary to combat and overcome this formidable disorder. Further, I must let her know that in exchange for removal of the condition that threatens her life she must be ready to lose an arm, and perhaps more—her whole shoulder girdle. Medical opinions of many kinds will have been given. Her husband will have access to consultation and advice. And undoubtedly somewhere along the line, or perhaps often, he will be told that pregnancy is an unwelcome condition.

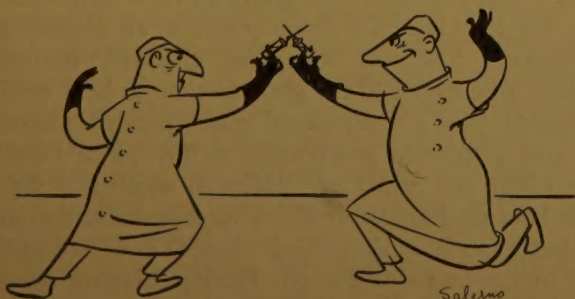
The final summing up, of course, will be for me. I can hear it now: "Sure, Doctor, whatever you say, but, Doctor, what about my pregnancy? How will I manage, my right arm gone? (*Not only that, but weakened and worn and debilitated by cancer that may not at all be cured completely by this procedure. She doesn't know this, but I do.*) A new baby, and my youngest only two and-a-half years?" And the husband: "Doctor, we want to follow your advice to the letter. You've been down the line with us and we will go right on as you chart the course. But, Doctor, will this pregnancy make it worse? Will it make it too hard for Ruth? When it's over, Doc, we'll have more children. You know how I love them, but now I don't know, and the other doctors say it will be bad for her." I hear it because I've heard it in other days and other years, and it is a sad plaintive song. And what will I say, what can I say that will lessen the bitterness of the potion that those who believe must swallow?

It is not by reason alone that I can hope to convince these two, patient and husband, that they must confidently accept what seems God's will for them. I can't even prove to them that good is always preferable to evil since I am blind and weary myself with compassion born of a certain knowledge of the trials and tribulations that they face. I can only, together with them, supplicate God to be merciful, to give abundant strength and endurance for the task at hand, and assure them that nothing of suffering is ever useless, but it is rather powerful ammunition against the absolute destruction which is embodied in sin, the sin of murder which would be the outcome of any attempt to do away with the pregnancy. This is not warm comfort, though we believe it and accept it. But God willing, painful though it is, let us try with pain, with anxiety, no matter—just let us steadfastly cling to this choice of Your will instead of ours!

the cardiac mother

I can't seem to lose consciousness. There are other problems that have come up today—a sort of pile on and inescapable demand to face up to the fact that we who are the priests of the mystic rite of medical art are after all only servants of the High Priest, Who demands much devotion and constant reference to Him if we are to achieve full stature and perform our tasks commendably.

Another patient came in with a heartache that wasn't all due to disease. This girl is a wonderful wife and mother. She has severe heart trouble, the result of damage during childhood. She has known all her life that she had marked physical limitations. She could never engage in many games of physical activity—she even danced cautiously—realizing the truth of the admonitions of her physician that any physical exercise beyond slow walking



would cause an exaggeration of her condition. I smile when I remember seeing her at our home dancing, flushed and excited and alive with the charming gaiety of youth, being carried off up stairs because of a sudden attack that necessitated our calling the physician for emergency care. We teased her that she was after the partner she was with—and sure enough he is her husband today and the father of her children. The years between that night and today have not been long, but her heart, never strong, works twice as hard to get half the work done as would a normal pump. And like that shows twice the wear and tear. We had delivered her once; it was an anxious 284 days, 200 of them spent in bed because of fear of overtaxing a tired mechanism. It's a known fact that pregnancy is a normal process but that does not mean that it doesn't exert the body to more general activity than it carries on in the non-pregnant state. This is true of many bodily processes—eating, walking—all these call for an increased output by the heart, more blood pumped to keep up the demand for increased activity. Pregnancy doubles almost the load carried by the heart and vascular systems. I therefore appraised this girl and her husband of the true situation after the child was born, suggesting that they seek a priest's advice about practicing rhythm to avoid pregnancy for at least two years—in the hope that we could measure just what was the rate of deterioration of her heart. I explained the theory and methods of periodic continence. Since Helen's cycle was not regular there were difficulties encountered, but eventually a workable arrangement was formulated.

another pregnancy

It was a year before I again saw Helen. She appeared at the office for prenatal care. Immediately it was obvious that she was now what we class a severe cardiac. There were unmistakable signs, symptoms and proven laboratory and X-ray evidence of rapid cardiac degeneration. We all, the patient, her husband and I, knew that the fight was going to be a tough one, further that each day represented a direct insult to an already weakened cardiac reserve. She was the most cheerful, uncomplaining, stalwart soul who ever had the good fortune to be a mother. She was a constant (not a professional goody-goody) source of wonderment and admirable amazement to my office crew and my patients—whom she called my "ladies in waiting." At the third month she became desperately ill. After hospitalization and expert care by a heart specialist she rallied—but, O Lord, we had six more or at least four more months to go. During this time she remained, of course, in the hospital under the unflinching eye of her medical

consultants. Despite this, she had another severe episode at the seventh month. After a slow and almost miraculous recovery from his attack, the infant seemed large enough to be viable. We induced labor and a living child was God's reward to her for her absolute trust and confidence in His mercy.

Certainly after this picture—a poor heart, a failing heart, a compromised heart, pregnancy could not be chosen. She acknowledged as did her good husband that there was some carelessness as to established permissible routine of continency. They agreed to try the method as outlined and permitted under spiritual direction. I worried day by day and month by month for them and with them. Human love is not an easily measured function. Two hearts that God has made one find a natural desire and consolation in each other. The days are hard and filled with trials and the natural comfort and solace of marital intercourse is a necessary and desirable thing. I understood when I saw her pregnant again today (a year later) how difficult it had been to remember to forget natural desires and demands and refer to a charted course. I could hear her now saying, "I know, Doctor, how irresponsible and foolish and improvident you think I am. I agree with you we must trust God but not tempt Him by going against all the known rules of the world of natural order, but Johnnie has been so worried and overworked and despondent (*They had a new business.*) and after all we're human." "All right," I said, "We'll try. Into the hospital right today and there you stay under constant care until we have your baby."

He merciless

I can see her face and hear her. She's been in this hospital before, one dedicated to dispensing care to the sick as an expression of Christian charity—staffed by those intent on serving Christ as nurses. The Blessed Sacrament dwells in their pavillion. Helen, a bad cardiac mother, despite the known and fearful complications, was ostracized and harped at because she had the indelicacy to become pregnant; she is accused of embracing this state to cause trouble and anxiety for those she depends on for care. For a full half-hour she told me of the snide remarks passed along in the compromising garb of suggested therapy by the "glee club"—who assert that certainly after all one should be able to control oneself; after all, she does have two children and she isn't any young budding rose. This had been gone through before at the time of her last difficult pregnancy.

And so this is part of my half-sleep, half-waking end of the day mulling over of what I can say to those who either consciously

or unconsciously take the joy out of the joyful sacrifice of a sick wife, who determines at maximum cost to keep her family together. I can't tell the sweet souls, God's chosen elect, that it is a hard thing to have food within reach and to go hungry, sure that what comes later will more than make up for the pangs of the moment. But how awful it is that we who spend our lives lessening pain and suffering are so unaware of inflicting it by our lack of understanding and compassion. Without these all we do is without significant relation to Christ's love.

"to God my Helper"

Helen and John should recall that it is a duty to guard health and strength and not willingly jeopardize one's life. But, O Lord, now that she is pregnant, and despite her fear of death and real terror since she has been through similar close skirmishes before, don't let me deprive her of the effort to make an uncomplaining, if not joyful sacrifice. If I don't help her, what will be the couple's alternative? They should not have more children. They can't or won't follow a permissible plan to limit their family. Perhaps Helen meant what she said to me: "I can't go on any longer with this fear and dread, not so much of danger to myself but to my husband (who is a normal young devoted mate and father). I want to be able to function like a normal wife and mother—not a weak, delicate flower, who once she carries out the rights of marriage becomes a vision of dread to the physician, distaste to the hospital who regard her as an animal. I want to be fixed so I won't have to worry. You say worry isn't good for my heart. That's all I've done my whole married life—please."

Yes, I know what I must say, what is really true and real, that God cannot abrogate the moral law just to provide her with freedom from fear. She must pray for guidance and help that miracles can and do happen, that sometimes the functions of normal fertility just stop long before their usual time. Above all, I must make her realize that I understand how hard her road is and marvel at her goodness and her courage, that surely God will make haste to help us, provided we use this suffering and pain.

Yes, medicine is a wonderful science. Look at the wonderful advancement which has taken place in the last twenty-five years. Some people read magazines to enable them to drop off to sleep but we doctors, we think of all we have heard in the rapid round of a day, draw them into some sort of a tangled bundle while we are in motion, and then set them out like a fish line at night to dry and unkink, and be orderly for the cast of the next day. There's

new drug for treatment of tuberculosis, promises are great—too and the young girl of last month couldn't have lasted for its trial.

the insane veteran

What will I do with Kim's problem? Whatever can I say? Her husband is a war tragedy just as dead as if he were riddled with lead at Anzio—but instead it was enough to scoop out his brain. It's been ten years of violence and useless effort to revive a withered plant. He goes to the veterans' hospital raving and destructive. He breaks out, he ravages the countryside—nothing but destructive, evil, unintelligible wildness. He's subdued (beaten into insensibility) and carted off again. Not one sensible oriented thought, word or deed in ten years. Today she had a call to come home. He had drunk acid—his throat and tongue are almost eaten up by the poison. The authorities feel that he should be allowed to succumb to his injuries. They have indicated their consensus of opinion: studied inactivity. They sort of let her know (fearing reprisal and law suits for neglect unless the wife is conditioned to realize they are doing her and society a favor).

Poor girl—she has a child, delivered just before he went away. She works like a veritable slave to give her daughter the best of everything, and maintaining her home takes every bit of substance she can accumulate. She looks at me, hoping I will be able to give her an assurance that it is right or permissible to go along with this plan. He's not in the world, there isn't one redeeming feature about him, he hasn't a chance of return to reality, and now that his port of swallowing is destroyed he can only be kept alive by extra attentions and ministrations (all of which are a nuisance and to no purpose). But this is what we must say: "Tell those hospital authorities that unless every effort is made to save that boy, you will have plenty of complaints to voice in the proper circle. Furthermore if proper vigilance had been exercised, his violent episodes would have been decidedly less."

his hidden purpose

And to her I will say, "Kim, you never know what purpose God serves in God's divine plan. I am certain, knowing what you have suffered these ten years, that you are a kinder, more compassionate person than you could ever have been otherwise. It is hard, almost impossible, to understand the necessity of preserving life in the seemingly unfit, particularly the long-standing withdrawn-from-reality type. But it is safer to be on God's side, since we don't know how long it takes for lucidity and reason to become reactivated. Oh yes, save life, no matter how useless it appears. That is our main purpose as physicians."

This has been a time for remembering and reassessing and curiously out comes the same comforting conviction. Practicing medicine and seeing suffering and pain doesn't make us cold—it's something entirely different. As we go along seeing human beings beset by disease, there is a grasp of what is really happening an intuitive prediction of the probable outcome of the many different maladies—so seemingly alike, yet each differing in pain. There are certain unique feelings the first time you see birth or death. The joy of being part of the magnificent accomplishment of life gives the physician a joyful sense of participation in God's plan of creation, a small part of what a parent must feel. Then the essential awareness that death is the enemy that you must fight and keep at bay—but you don't and suddenly it's taken out of your hands—and you know and you say God knows best and you turn to the next enemy, not at all cowed by the last struggle. Year after year you learn to fight manfully and diligently and wisely, recognizing that the supreme victory is to have conditioned those who must die for eternity by allowing them to accept death rather than have it forced upon them. Suffering is never useless—this we know and believe, but we have no proof that it will be equilibrated in this life. Rather we in medicine see examples which, if taken segmentally, seem utterly cruel and unnecessary.

Children before the age of reason, bystanders, non-participants in anything but glorifying their Creator, are bombed to death or mangled by disease, and their pain is a visible, meaningful, heart-rending thing. The young and fair, the good and pure who seem veritable holocausts to malignant disease to our human minds seem to die and are to our half-sight a wanton waste.

the use of suffering

What then is the answer? To suffer purposefully, hopefully and gracefully, this is the only way to use this common human experience. We accept, because we must, that suffering will occur as long as life exists. To use suffering and make it pay off, as our human experiences must be related consciously to Christ's Passion. Supreme Love, Omnipotent Justice suffered as man in the most seemingly useless and wasteful fashion on Calvary. The Crucifixion was only horrifying and mysterious until the Resurrection. To suffer with hope and certainty is the unmistakable department of a true Christian. If we try to accept the trials and the difficulties of life as patiently and tolerantly as possible, we have ample evidence that we will be participants not only in Calvary but in the Resurrection which follows.

Mercy for Sinners

CHRISTIANS are always in danger of growing smug in their mediocre goodness, of losing compassion for sinners, and of forgetting that from the moment Christ said, "I came not to call the just but sinners," sinners assumed a special place in Christian life. Mercy to sinners is the mark of the Christian as it was of Christ. Father Tavard, whose most recent article for *INTEGRITY* appeared in the issue on the Apostolate, is a French Assumptionist.

George H. Tavard, A.A.: The pharisee of the parable thanked God for being unlike the crowd. The publican implored mercy on his own sinfulness. A third person in the story was Christ, Who had come to save both the pharisee and the publican, the man who kept the Law to the tiniest tittle and the man who burned it by hobnobbing with the heathen. The sinner who acknowledged his solidarity with sinful mankind was forgiven. The just man who boasted of his unique righteousness met with condemnation. For holiness is neither a legal sinlessness nor an escape from the results of original sin. It is the *acceptance of forgiveness* for our own sin and for that of mankind.

Judged on love

"On the last day we shall be judged on love," St. John of the Cross attests. Sainthood is a question of loving "the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind." The same standard applies to those who hardly sin and to inveterate transgressors of the Law, to those who regularly receive the Sacraments and to those who never do, to those who share the life of the Church to the utmost and to those who linger on the outskirts of Christianity. The Law and the Prophets, exterior regulations and interior inspirations, are judged by one stamp: love for God and "our neighbor." This is one and the same love, for loving "with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind" cannot be a private affair. No water-tight gates keep us from communing with other hearts, souls, strengths and minds. Our membership in mankind necessarily entails experiences of manifold friendships, of an unceasing intellectual and practical give-and-take which subsists in the supernatural realm. The love that makes saints is a communal love. We shall be judged on the love we

have given or refused others, and on the love others have given or refused us (for their love may increase or lessen our responsibility).

the one in need

The problem is then, who is my neighbor? My neighbor is the person who needs me and whom I need. The priest and levi who thought themselves righteous, felt no need to go out of the way and help the half-dead traveler by the roadside. The Samaritan, who was officially impure, needed to justify himself in the eyes of God. He felt compassion for his suffering fellowman and became his neighbor. He needed that man and that man in turn needed him. They became neighbors in the Christian sense of the phrase: each represented Christ for the other.

In all human relationships over which charity presides, spiritual incompleteness is mutually experienced and remedied. Each one voices a call from God to the other. The deeper the voice in our soul the longer its echo may resound. Because he needs the whole Church to make up for his failures, the saint has a truly universal love. He is neighbor to all since he needs them all. His presence is an appeal to all, a reminder of Christ's love, a pointer to God. All need him and are neighbors to him.

If we are not saints, our situation is nonetheless the same. The choice lies open to us between Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and St. Paul's wish to be "all things to all men." If v



**Suzy Q's a sinner,
Everybody knows.
Backyard theologians
Are adding to her woes!**

cannot maintain a high level of charity, at least we can aim at it. If we are Christ's disciples, we do. For the ethics of the gospel rests on a basic assumption: No less than all the branches and twigs of the vine are part and parcel of the Father's vineyard; not one leaf of the immense tree of the Church but is required for the birds of the air to find coolness in its shade; all the members of the body belong to all other members. Each and all are equally indispensable, for all are meant to be saved and be granted a place in the kingdom of heaven.

Our Lord's love of sinners

This is why Our Lord ministered to the poor. Not only to the victims of the well-to-do of His time, but also to the small-sized souls that cannot rise above the attractions of this world. The apostles were shocked to see Him talk to a Samaritan woman. He scandalized pharisees by accepting invitations from publicans—racketeers though they were—and being friendly with harlots. No two persons could have differed so widely as Matthew the money-changer and Magdalen the prostitute. Yet Jesus' remark in both cases amounted to the same: "I did not come to call the just, but sinners," and "He who is forgiven little loves little." The neighbor of Jesus is the one who needs Him most.

It must have made strange news to the gossips of Israel when the Lord addressed a crowd where "every disease and every infirmity" was represented and told them: "You are the salt of the earth. . . . You are the light of the world." But His meaning was clear to those who had eyes to see, for the light that can dispel the darkness of the world is the light of mercifulness. And who can be merciful, unless those who are in need of mercy?

The scribes and pharisees were indeed righteous in terms of obedience to the Law. Yet they refused to forgive transgressors and this implied their condemnation. Our Lord banned adultery more radically than they did. When they brought a woman caught in adultery, however, He did not stone her, as the Law commanded, but "wrote with his finger on the ground." "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And He wrote again "with his finger on the ground." The scribes and pharisees, who were familiar with the books of the prophets, did not wait for him to write a third time. For they knew from the prophet Daniel that "fingers from a man's hand" had written three times on the wall of the king's palace at Babylon, and the king had been slain the following night. They fled, so that the symbol of reprobation would not be completed. "Go and do not sin again" was all that Jesus told the adulteress.

"do not judge"

The paradox of Christian life is that a Christian who does his best not to sin has no authority to condemn sinners. The Christians of the first centuries were well aware of this. The sinner was the one set apart from the community, since the community as such was endowed with the purity of the Messianic era. But his penance and re-admittance to communion was a public undertaking for which all members of the Church were corporately responsible. While no sin was condoned, forgiveness was sought for by all and reconciliation was a liturgical experience wherein the whole Church took part. In the Middle Ages visiting prisons became one of the works of mercy, for mercifulness to sinners was then understood to be a prerequisite to the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Such was the attitude of Christian centuries: sin and forgiveness were the two poles of the human experience of moral effort; *mercy filled the chasm between them.*

The trouble with our kind of society is that we judge sin with a double standard. The religious point of view is reserved for the confessional, for the relationship of priest to penitent, outside of which we apply principles of social conformity. A public sinner may have genuine contrition; he may have truly atoned for his failures and the scandal he caused; he may have been forgiven. Yet in spite of all that, we know what he did and that "a good Catholic" would not have done it. His sin may be forgiven but we do not condone his having sinned. Whereas the former is wiped away by the Sacrament, the latter earmarks him to the eyes of "good society"; and the more lenient the secular mind becomes, the more adamant is our attitude. Pharisaism is being rebuilt. Instead of remaining on religious ground we obey a social instinct of group defense.

To give an instance, how many repentant divorcees are not looked askance by their relatives? Obviously, former misbehavior is no certificate of present good conduct. But "misbehavior" and "good conduct" belong to the vocabulary of social usage, whereas only "sin" and "forgiveness" are relevant in a religious context.

This practical slanting of the Catholic notion of sin occasionally creates a reversed bias. We are often tempted to combat immorality by means of group-pressure in favor of good moral standards. The risk is that, like so many others, some Catholics may come to regard morality as what is right to the eyes of their group rather than what is right *in itself*. They would then accept the principle of group conformity which provides the basis for the

indifference of secular societies to moral issues: like the men who want to check marxism with purely economic measures, and thus unwittingly agree with the philosophical ground of marxism.

Church of sinners

The case is more intricate when we deal with actual sinners. For even though we should avoid being fussy, scandal is nothing to be dismissed lightly. Yet just as the gospel must be preached to those who have not known it, it is to be announced again, not to those who practise it, but rather to those who don't. These may well be within the fold. For the Catholic Church, unlike a number of separated bodies, has always claimed to be a Church of sinners. It is not to her wisdom that the sins of her children come as a shock, but to those who confuse spiritual life with perfectionism. Back in the Dark Ages the Christian people canonized some murderers who had repented before dying. The Archdiocese of Paris has a feast of St. Charlemagne, though the old Frankish emperor looks more like a beastly ruffian than like a Barclay-Street saint. That is Christian realism, which does not condemn sinners, for sin and repentance, hatred and love, are not on display on the market place but belong to the mystery of grace, where nobody can judge them.

"Judge not and you will not be judged; condemn not and you will not be condemned." It may be good to recall that this is Christ's injunction, when we feel like giving up a friendship because our friend is making a fool of himself; when a mother discovers with untold sorrow that her unwed daughter is pregnant; when so-and-so is going steady with a divorcee; or when we suspect that Mr. and Mrs. X. practise contraception.

Once during the last war, in a country occupied by the Nazis, I heard a well-known preacher announce triumphantly from the pulpit of a cathedral that Christians were supposed to love their personal enemies but not their national foes. The courage of this statement did not make it right.

And still more would he be mistaken, who would think that we are not supposed to love those who disobey the Church or fall short of Christian morality. The good intention of this indignant aloofness would not make it right. When Christ said, "Be merciful as your Father is merciful," He put no condition to it. Christian love is the greater as the person we love has more need of it. It "expects nothing in return"; neither that those we love should become moral, nor that they should practise the faith. "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

It bears to see those we love despise our love; it believes their sincerity in spite of contrary evidence; it hopes that God's justice weighs man's true difficulties as well as his false excuses; it endures the sight of sin.

Christian escapism

Christians who crave for a deep spiritual life in the din of a busy city are tempted to escape; to bid farewell forever to the immoral nonsense that catches their eye at every street corner newsstand; not to see again the seven capital sins highlighted in the papers they read and the programs they tune in. Now always the Church needs contemplatives who will fulfill their vocation in sheltered cloisters. But more than ever she also needs the kind of contemplative whose vocation is to bring mercy to those who need mercy most, to achieve a Christian witness in non-Christian society. There is no escape for these which would not become a treason. The first Christians did not leave the heathen lands of the Roman Empire. They died as martyrs and, over a few centuries, they changed the ethos of society. Our martyrdom may be only a slow day by day testimony to our belief and our love: it is nonetheless the leaven that should transform the lump of Godless mankind into the living bread of the children of God.

A very subtle escape is frequently practised by those who have grown so used to modern society that they no longer perceive its anti-Christian nature. By pushing out of sight the urgency of a witness for Christ, they remove the whole meaning of the personal responsibility of the Christian laity. Their slogan could be "The world may be bad, but we know that Catholics are good." Its wishful justification could read: "The Church's stand is so clear and well-known that we have no personal obligation besides keeping the commandments and contributing some money. As for those who fall or stay out, we can abandon them to the justice of God." But God's justice takes count of the charity and mercy that have been denied men by others who should have become their "neighbors." His condemnation will fall upon the righteous who have not shown mercy to those who needed it. The Church is not an air-raid shelter where we are secure against the judgment of God. We cannot escape into the Church from our spiritual liabilities.

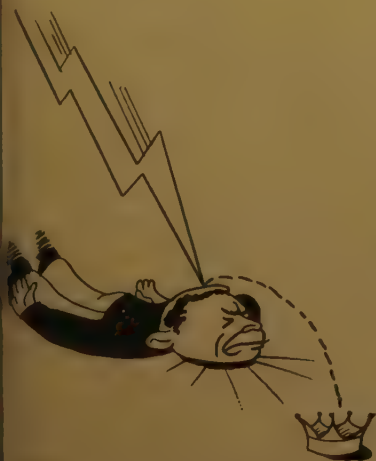
"the table of sinners"

Recent examinations of the manuscripts of St. Thérèse of Lisieux have revealed that her sister Carmelites who edited her "story of a soul" altered the texts in order to soft-pedal a spiritual doctrine that proved too strong meat for them. The figure of St. Thérèse will seemingly be very different from what we have been

used to when the full extent of the alterations is made known. The new authentic texts that have now been uncovered show, however, that the mainspring of St. Thérèse's interior life was the love for sinners of God Who knows how hard it is to be a saint. Her small way is really the way of those who hope in God from the quagmire of sin. As for herself, she experienced all the temptations and attractions, all the suspenses and base instincts of modern unbelief. From her convent she ate at "the table of sinners" as much as any of the giants of atheism; but she soars high among the masters of the modern world because sinfulness became with her a ground for love.

The message of the greatest of recent saints is that God loves men whose sinfulness creates in them a bottomless need of Him. Likewise, the vocation of Christians, now more than ever before, is to become "neighbors" to sinners and unbelievers by bringing them, unconditionally, the Christian love of which they are deprived.

The hallmark of Christian behavior is not sinlessness. For if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." It is contrition for our misdeeds and mercy to others.



SURPRISE

Joe Bumblebee was striving
To get himself a crown,
When God with tender mercy
Slapped poor Joseph down!
P.S. He got it!

Without Mercy

THE most flagrant violations of mercy are in modern warfare. So overwhelming are they, that often the Christian to defend his peace of mind feels that he has to look the other way. Jerem O'Sullivan-Barra has written several illuminating articles on the issues of modern war.

Jerem O'Sullivan-Barra: A recent discussion among people of Catholic Action brought out two views on the role of mercy. One view was that if the works of justice are completely carried out, there is really no necessity for mercy. Justice was a sort of masculine virtue, which could guide men and nations by strict concepts of right, and which, if left alone, could steer the paths of individuals and states into ways of peace. Too often mercy, classified as a feminine type of virtue, entered the picture too early, thus preventing the full exercise of justice, or took over from justice so that the firm basis which only justice can erect was lacking in relations between men. The role of mercy was relegated to that of a sort of compassionate afterthought—if the works of justice were not completed, then mercy could step in to make up for the lack.

The other view was certainly not a disparagement of the role of justice—fundamental and necessary. Certainly, there have been times when a re-assertion of the prior role of justice was necessary—particularly when paternalistic employers gave to their employees as generosity what they should have given to them in justice. In that sense, it is true that generosity only begins when justice finishes. But human nature being what it is, according to the second view, the fullness of justice is hardly ever obtained, and mercy should not be a runner-up barely overtaking justice, but a constant companion of justice. The relationship of mercy to justice can be an ancillary one, if you will, in which justice plays the masculine role, and mercy the tempering, softening role that is so often the part of the female.

This article will attempt to explore some of the implications of the latter role of mercy in an age which is singularly without mercy, an age marked by the phenomenon of total war.

justice by violent means

In our time Catholics join with those of other faiths and of no faith in seeking justice by violent means—means which totally exclude any operation of the virtue of mercy. The years of the twentieth century have been marked by two wars which spread from the womb of Europe to engulf and shake the farthest corners of the globe. Smaller wars, like the Civil War in Spain, and later the wars in Korea and Indo-China, mark the so-called years of peace. Though Catholics may be on both sides of a conflict, mercy is driven away from the area covered by hostilities. If, for one moment, a nation engaged in modern war, or a substantial group of its citizens, decided that Christian mercy was to play its role as ancillary to justice, that nation's war machine would grind to a stop. For Christian mercy is a moral virtue prompting us to compassion and to succor those who are in need. No one is more in need of immediate succor than the defenseless people of the cities against whom the wars of today are made.

Further, in its special sense, mercy urges us not to enforce the requirements of strict justice, but rather to a tempering of the rigor of the law. Even when the other party or nation is clearly guilty, it is mercy which prompts us to overlook and pardon guilt. Mercy, then, is that aspect of love which can so inform the role of justice that it would make its exercise intrinsically different and actually creative, rather than a sterile insistence on the letter of the law.

the meaning of mercy

In modern war, then, the operation of mercy would be an enormous weakness leading to certain defeat. Hitler's teachings verbalized this point, as they put into words many of the other unstated, but nonetheless actual, realities of our time, when they announced that any application of mercy or "humility" to international life is a sign of character weakness and deterioration. Such ideas hark back, further than Nietzsche, to the Stoics who rejected the Greek concept of mercy as a human reaction of compassion, evoked by the contemplation of evil that comes to someone without guilt. The Stoics called this affective mercy, or sense of pity, a disease of the soul, a sadness unworthy of the wise man.

It is only in the New Testament that the concept emerges as a moral relationship between man and man—a relationship founded on the mercy shown by God to man. *Eleison*, "have mercy," is the constant cry of men to God, and to expect an answer men are expected to maintain a relationship of mercy among themselves as individuals and as groups. It is this relationship which has been so monstrously broken by the wars of our time—

and even more monstrously eradicated from the forefront of the Christian conscience. A preparation for the crowding out of mercy in time of war was the development in areas anciently Christian of the spirit of harsh nationalism. This grew out of patriotism which operated as an exercise of justice rather than as an exercise of love. Patriotism became not merely an expression of greater love for those of our country (because, in a way, they were part of our own household to whom we owed prior duties of loyalty and service) than for those of other nations or households; instead patriotism degenerated into nationalism, which descended simply and clearly into a form of hatred for surrounding peoples.

On such a preparation were based the total wars of our time, wars marked by campaigns "without mercy" and by "merciless all-out bombing attacks," and conducted under such un-Christian concepts as unconditional surrender, blockades and the use of non-directable weapons.

everything is a legitimate target

First of all, we must admit that total war, in which both sides engaged in World War II, left no opening for mercy. Every resource of the enemy was a legitimate target—the communication system, the food supply, the total productive capacity, the water supply, and, toward the end, the morale of the people. When we treat the morale of a whole people as a resource we must destroy then we can in good conscience destroy their undefended or "open cities, including schools, hospitals, homes for the aged, universities, churches. It is very significant that toward the end of World War II there were no "open cities" for either side. Any city which was within enemy lines was a logical subject for annihilation. I remember sitting in a destroyed town of Germany and asking a professor of moral theology from an American seminary what his verdict was on the destruction of such towns as Freiburg, where there were no military installations. He stated calmly that the principle of the "double effect" was operative, since the civilian casualties were not caused intentionally but only as a secondary effect to the destroying of German morale to hasten the end of the war. This reasoning is specious, of course, but if those acquainted with theology can thus justify the destruction of the innocent, what can we expect from the commonality of mankind so pressured by social taboos and by military disciplines?

reversal of the works of mercy

I felt like doing in that battered South German city what Milton Mayer said he wanted to do when he walked through the

bubble-piled streets of Darmstadt, past the homes that served as the sepulchres of families—just to sit down among the broken bones and weep. Many Americans read during the war a front page story of the aerial bombing by United States bombers of a great reservoir in an enemy country. The original story was backed up by feature material giving details of how carefully the bombing expedition was planned, and how great a number of people would be affected by the interruption in water supply. The whole action was treated as a tremendous achievement, since it was the master-stroke of that type of strategy which would surely “knock the enemy out of the war.” My blood ran cold at the thought of all the innocent and sick who would suffer as a result of this earthly blow to civilian life, but nowhere did I see any expression of pity. As one of the works of mercy is to give drink to the thirsty, this act symbolized modern war in the fact of bringing thirst to the many.

In point of fact, every one of the corporal works of mercy is literally reversed in total war. Rather than shelter the shelterless, we destroy the shelter of man; rather than feed the hungry, we make the children of man hungry for generations by uprooting them and scorching and mining their fruitful fields; rather than clothe the naked, we raze the productive plants that make the cloth to cover them; rather than ransom the captive, we make a captive of every member of the enemy nation we can lay our hands on; rather than heal the sick, we hasten their death by blockading supplies of goods and medicines. And to make the unspeakable cycle complete, we unbury the dead. Both in France and Italy, I saw the cemeteries whose peaceful graves were opened by bombing, so that the bones of the long dead had to be buried once again. One was the cemetery of a town in Lorraine, France, in which not one house stood after a continuous air and ground bombardment by German forces. The other was the cemetery of San Lorenzo-outside-the-Walls, which suffered in one of the Allied bombings of Rome.

ward schizophrenia

How can the spiritual works of mercy flourish when the corporal works of mercy, with which they are so intimately linked in the economy of salvation, are completely scuttled? The society of our day leads to schizophrenia, since we still preach the corporal works of mercy while we perform, or prepare to perform or stand by while others perform, a diabolical travesty of every work of mercy. Mercy has its natural side, human compassion. To succor the unfortunate, particularly the helpless and innocent, is a drive

even of the natural man. When man, both on the natural and supernatural levels, must dam up and suppress his drive to compassionate help, when he becomes such a conformist that he participates in the unleashing of every imaginable evil on his fellow members of the human race, he is moving toward a schizophrenic state. It is no wonder that the director of the Veterans' Administration Psychiatry and Neurology Service estimates that by 1966 six hundred thousand veterans of the armed services would be afflicted with some form of mental disorder. A Viennese psychiatrist is finding success in treating present day patients because he finds that in many the moral consciousness, the need for a religious life—so basic to man's mental health—has been suppressed. This is in contra-distinction to the findings of the Victorian period, when excessive prudery in many countries resulted in the suppression of even the knowledge of the existence of sexual drives—particularly in the female. Today many of us feel it is the drive to compassion and to mercy, that is blocked off, to the peril of the wholeness and integrity of man's nature, and to the peril of a society which gives lip service to the Sermon on the Mount and the corporal works of mercy while relying on total violence for the implementation of its ideals.

Three of the most strikingly merciless aspects of modern total war became clear in World War II; the use of unconditional surrender as a slogan for ending the war; the use of blockades which punished both enemy and defeated ally at the same time; the use of unlimited weapons of destruction.

unconditional surrender

Each side in a war comes to consider the people, or at least the leader, of the opposing side as less than human. Just as we came to consider the Nationalist Socialist leaders of Germany, and later the German army, as completely barbarous and unworthy even of fraternization in peace-time, so they considered Americans cold, calculating beasts who made the sky a source of dreadful noise and death. Because of the mass expulsion, the enslavements, the mass extermination in concentration camps, we evolved a policy which justified every merciless act against a whole people, and which justified us in not offering or accepting any conditions for a peaceful surrender. Unconditional surrender meant that we did not consider any part of our enemies as human beings, that we were bound by no covenant, human or divine, in our treatment of them after the end of hostilities.

The cold justice of this policy had many results, including the prolonging of the war by desperate leaders and the execution

y those leaders of every man or woman who attempted to get rough to the Allies with peace offers representing the overwhelming will of the masses of the German people. This policy also led us, as Americans, into the merciless arrogance of the post-war period when we forbade fraternization, co-operated in the policy of reparation in blood which we agreed to at Yalta, and stood by while the Potsdam agreement was carved out by which more than twelve million human beings were uprooted from their homes and dispossessed of their belongings.

By the reparations in blood, an uncounted number of drafted German soldiers were kept in Russia as slave laborers, to rebuild the towns and factories they had helped to destroy. This plan sounds logical from the point of view of strict justice—what these men wantonly destroyed in war they were to be forced to build again in peace-time. Mercy dictates another course, namely the return of these and of all drafted men to their families at the earliest possible moment, so that children may have their fathers restored to them, wives their husbands, and mothers their sons. In this way can the wounds in men and society begin to heal. Once having signed away these men into slavery at Yalta, the United States was never able to send a commission into Russia to inspect their treatment, never able to get an exact figure of the number kept in slavery, never able to get a report on how many died. I have seen groups of these men returning to West Germany, after as many as seven years of slave labor, still wearing pieces of the uniforms in which they were originally captured. Many hundreds of thousands will never return, having died in Siberia, or having been kept behind forever for insubordination and bad behavior and other reasons. Many of them returned to find their families uprooted from their homes in East Europe, or lost without trace. These are the end conditions of unconditional surrender.

Blockades and atomic bombs

Blockade, as a weapon of total war, wreaks its strongest vengeance on non-combatants, and on the weakest and most helpless among them. During war, as we all know, the best food and medical supplies go to the men who are fighting the war. The blockading of essential food supplies and scarce medicines is an accepted war practice by now, and it is the civilians, the sick, the aged, the children, who feel the effects. A plan to feed Belgian and Dutch civilians was proposed by an American statesman during World War II whereby limited amounts of food would be sent on neutral ships at regular intervals. Even if the German army commandeered any one shipment, it would not supply enough

food for the German military machine for a day, and so could not prolong the war. The councils of the Allies refused to try out this merciful plan.

The use of the unlimited weapon, the atomic bomb, was a logical development from the unlimited bombing and shelling that preceded the discovery of atomic power. I have talked with medical personnel who participated in tests during the preparation of the atomic bomb. The long-term effects of the bomb on human beings were not fully known when it was decided to utilize the weapon on Japan. This is mercilessness into the next generation. Many Catholics justify the use of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki because "it saved our boys' lives and brought them home sooner." Toward the end of a war, we can justify any atrocity, any cruelty, because "it shortens the war and brings our boys home." In other words anything goes in the way of attack, reprisal, or mass destruction. Moral considerations are absolutely put aside. The irony of the situation is that we on our side became involved in the war effort precisely because we felt that "anything did not go," that there were moral limits beyond which we would not permit a nation to go. Even the nod in the direction of mercy that might prevail at the beginning of a war is replaced by utter moral degradation as the war progresses. Both sides reach the same moral abyss.

On the German side it was only in 1943, after Allied bombings began to "take out" German cities, that the burnings in the concentration camps began—first the gypsies, who had no government to protest for them, and then the Jewish victims who were made the scapegoats for all evils. Evil, even on a side intrinsically evil, was progressive and ever more unspeakably inhuman.

the bombing of Nagasaki

The use of the weapon of mass destruction was in a way the most fitting end for the holocaust that we call World War II. The same amoral planning, the same absence of any concept of mercy marked the dropping of this apocalyptic weapon on Japan. The story of the dropping of the second bomb on Nagasaki reveals that Nagasaki was only a third target, to be used only if the other two primary targets were unreachable because of fog or other reasons. The pilot of the bomb-bearing plane, the "Great Artiste," was told not to return under any circumstances with the weapon. He had to drop it. The first two targets were under fog, and gas was running low, and Nagasaki was the nearest target to the base. The crew had to get rid of the bomb, and so it was dropped by radar.

on a city without particular military importance—on a city unable to warn its civilians in any way of impending death.

A boy in Nagasaki wrote of the bomb that came to his city. "It was like a cloud, but it was a pillar of fire too. It looked hard and soft and alive and dead, all at the same time, and ugly, too, all at once.

"After a few minutes, I saw something coming up from the road along the river that looked like a parade of roast chickens. Some of them kept asking for, 'Water, water!'

"I wasn't burning up any more. I shivered. I ran back to the cottage.

"I would rather blind myself than ever have to see such a sight again!"

His own mother was a mound of charred ashes identified by a rosary chain she had carried. The beads had been melted. When he returned to grade school, he found that twelve hundred of the children had died under the bomb, and another three hundred were ill with "wounds or atomic sickness."

Catholics who are drafted into modern war must be prepared to cause even greater holocausts. But our moral acuity is so blunted that we can face such a denial of Christian mercy without seeing its implication.

a movie for children

An editor of a magazine noted the tenor of our thinking recently when she took her two young nephews to a film called "Prince Valiant." At the end of the film, the knights poured oil on the castle of their enemy, so that the flames would reach higher and higher and finally all inside would suffer death by burning. After the film she questioned the boys, trying to get a reaction to the cruel treatment accorded the enemy by the valiant "knights" so often pictured as symbolizing the best in Christian tradition. At last her nephews said, "But those were the bad guys." That made it all right. The interesting comment on this film is that it is classified "A-1," unobjectionable for children as well as adults. It is hardly any wonder that the moral acuity of our boys drafted into war is no keener, when the Christian virtue of mercy is so lamentably distorted in a film supposedly adapted to young minds. The reaction of the two children to the extermination scene in "Prince Valiant" parallels our own, when we heard of enemy cities being subjected to saturation bombing. If we thought of the civilian population, we would quiet our conscience by saying, "But those were the bad guys!"

cold, just conformists

Now that we have an absolute weapon capable of tearing a hole a mile wide in the ocean floor or of "taking out" a metropolitan area like New York, our lack of mercy and its compassionate identification with the sufferings of others may be the most fateful thing of all. There is nothing to hold us back. We shall go forward without mercy to achieve the aims of strict justice—as formulated by minds operating on a purely natural level. Catholic conformists will play their usual unthinking role.

In *The Last Days of Mankind* an Austrian author, Karl Kraus, had some insights as to what may be in store for our cold, just, conformist generation. Erich Heller paraphrases the thoughts of Kraus: "If our imagination sufficed to visualize the reality behind the news column of one morning paper, this reality would not, and could not, exist. And if one man's imagination were inspired by it and gave expression to it, all the tragedies of ancient Greece would dwindle into idyllic sentimentalities before such a drama of human corruption and human agony.

"Man has achieved a technical superiority over himself which threatens him with unavoidable disaster. The combined employment of technique and 'man-power' has got the better of *the power of his humanity*. Between his technical mastery (which would have terrified Prometheus) and his imagination (which not even pigmies could eke out to make from it fairy tales for their children) he has fixed a gulf spacious enough for Armageddon to take place.

"And this gulf is made by men without mercy, and by leaders who do not teach mercy. But perhaps we may be able to escape Armageddon through Him Who will save us, 'not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy.'"

HOW ODD OF GOD

God's mercy is dispensed
With very little fuss.
Rain will bring a smile to one,
While twenty more will cuss!



Christ's Merciful Indwelling

THROUGHOUT all of Caryll Houselander's writing (in, for example, her books *This War is the Passion and Guilt*) there is an emphasis on the mystery of Christ's indwelling man. It is to be expected then that her personal approach to the problem of suffering should be by way of His merciful indwelling.

Caryll Houselander: At first sight it seems a curious paradox that in an age in which men are turning most of their energies to the task of inventing more and more terrible and efficient means of killing one another, they talk more and more glibly about mercy.

But a little reflection shows that there is not so much inconsistency after all, because the very meaning of the word "mercy" has changed. So much so that one of the most popular of the new conceptions of it today is, in fact, the preventing or the destroying of life.

Indeed it would not be inconsistent with the ideas of the present day to re-name the Atom Bomb, the "Mercy Bomb."

the ages of faith

A glance backward through the years that followed the Reformation, streamed through the appalling materialism of the industrial revolution, and culminated in our own days, shows plainly enough how and why this pathetic misconception of mercy has come about.

In the ages of faith men knew and trusted God. They knew themselves to be sinners too, and therefore in dire need of His mercy themselves, and as their living and their dying were in His hands, they knew that in everything that happened to them, in every detail of their lives and of their deaths, there was always the touch of God's mercy.

In those days even sinners (and indeed *all* men are sinners) were in a sense, a very lovely sense, intimate with Jesus Christ. The crucifix was before their eyes and it was a continual showing and reminder of the tenderness of His love.

They knew too that there was proof of His mercy and of His tenderness in the crosses which they themselves had to carry from the cradle to the grave.

They were not as afraid of hardship, poverty, pain and death as men are today. They knew that none of these things was God's

will for them, that they had come into the world when sin came into it, but that mercy came with them; for Christ had made these things His own, and so gave them a special power to help to restore men to the happiness which they had thrown away.

After three hundred years of spiritual blindness, in which even the memory of Christ has faded more and more from the minds of men, God is no longer known. So little do men know Him that they believe themselves to be more merciful than He is; so much so that they even presume the right to take life and death into their own hands.

Today it is considered merciful to prevent or destroy life, if by doing so one will prevent suffering, hardship, poverty or even a struggle with self.

Mercy is thought to mean either making life painless and effortless or extinguishing it!

the consequences of sin

Certainly this kind of "mercy" is often no more than a thin disguise for selfishness. Many men prefer to be childless than to deny themselves for their children. They prefer to give the fatal dose than to be harrowed themselves by the sight of the suffering of those whom they love, or of those, who, because they themselves have become so unmerciful, have become a burden to them.

"How can a merciful God let little children suffer?"

"How can a merciful God let a lonely old woman live on in pain?"

"How can a merciful God let this malformed infant live?"

This kind of question is always on their lips, and they attempt to answer by putting themselves in the place of God, and the lives and deaths of other people into their own hands.

The real answer is Jesus Christ.

I repeat, suffering and death are not God's will for us: His will for us is happiness and life, but through sin we have brought suffering and death into the world, and now we have to accept the world as it is, not as we imagined it could be, if we—instead of God—ruled it.

We cannot do away with the consequences of sin; we must work for our daily bread in the sweat of our brow; we must be born in travail, and every one of us must go through the anguish of dying. But we can transform all this suffering in the power and the love of Christ; or perhaps I should say more truly, He transforms it Himself in us. Thus it is that the mercy of God is at the heart of everything that we have to suffer.

Christ redeeming

Christ did not simply pass through the world in thirty-three years. He came into the world to redeem it, and He remains in it now, indwelling us. He has made all our suffering His own.

If we must face hardship, Christ accepts that hardship and shoulders it. If we are poor, our poverty is Christ's poverty. It is Christ Who suffers our pains, and Christ Who dies each of our deaths.

Consequently whatever we suffer has the creative and redeeming power of Christ's love.

This does not mean that we are to be passive about suffering. True, when it comes to us we must accept it, and the more vividly we realize that it is Christ Who is accepting it in us, the more easily we shall be able to bear it, even sometimes to rejoice in it. But we have also the obligation to try to alleviate it for other people, to turn our energies and resources to finding ways to heal and cure disease, to end bitter poverty, to comfort troubled minds, and indeed to perform all the works of mercy which are themselves manifestations of God's mercy, and are done only in the power and patience of Christ's love.

The more they are done consciously in the name of Christ, the more does compassion, the real mercy of God, increase in us. The more aware anyone is that what he does to comfort and help someone else—whoever that person is—he does to Christ, the more his heart will expand and his will strengthen for the work of healing and love.

It is part of the mercy hidden in suffering that no one who is indwelt by Christ suffers for himself alone; his suffering is Christ's Passion going on in the world now. Because that is so, in the aches and pains of one old woman in a home for the aged, or the tears of one little child for a passing unhappiness, or even the cry of an infant, the healing of the world's sorrow may begin.

Things that seem to be without significance to those who have forgotten God have the immeasurable significance of Christ's love. One tear shed by the Infant Christ could have redeemed the world, but because it was necessary for man's ultimate and endless happiness that suffering should go on in the world through time, Christ chose to suffer everything that any man suffers and to shed the tears of all the children who come into the world.

An innocent child

Visiting a children's orthopedic hospital, I came upon a tiny little girl stretched on a cruciform splint. My first immediate re-

action was that of the unbeliever, "Why should an innocent little child suffer this?"

But the child was laughing and happy, and while I stood talking to her and to her faithful little teddy bear, I realized that I was talking to the Christ Child; that those tiny, outstretched arms reached from end to end of the earth, embracing the whole world with the embrace of God's mercy.

How often have I remembered her, when I have read of the appalling cruelty inflicted on so many little children by men. Children starved in concentration camps, suffocated in gas chambers, driven into consumption by hardships still going on behind the iron curtain—children depending on *man's* mercy! How often indeed I have thought of that little, laughing, outstretched child, who herself in the hands of God reached out in His mercy to them all.

I think that there could hardly be a greater apostolate than to convince everyone who does not know it, of the indwelling of Christ in man, for only through this knowledge can anyone know the tremendous power of his own suffering. Indeed without this knowledge, a life of simply immeasurable value may seem to be useless.

a burden to others

In a big London hospital I met a middle-aged woman who had suffered for years from a rare and painful disease, involving her in many operations and continual suffering. She was deeply unhappy because she had a genuine love of her fellow creatures and had always wanted to be of service to them, but she supposed that constant illness had made her life useless—even a burden to others.

One day she told me that she had left her body to the hospital for research after her death, so that in that way at least she might use her misfortune to help other people.

I asked her why she waited to be dead—why did she not offer her whole self, body and soul, *now*, as a *living sacrifice* to help other people? A living sacrifice in Christ?

She did not know it was possible. She did not know Christ or that her suffering was His.

When she learned this, her whole attitude changed. She became radiant. She learned it on the eve of her sixth operation, and the operation was not a success. It was intended only to give her relief from pain, but it did not. She might live for years, but the pain would go on.

On the day she left the hospital, she told me that she was thankful because if her pain had been taken from her she would have nothing at all to offer for other people. Now she had Christ's passion, and knew that her life had that meaning.

fear of death

Perhaps the suffering which dogs most people all their life is the fear of death. Yet it is often in death that God's mercy is seen almost visibly. If to those who love God, everything works out for the best, I am certain that they die at the time and in the way that is most merciful for them, that not one second of pain or sorrow is allowed by God that is not necessary to bring a man to ultimate happiness.

I myself have had at least one rehearsal for death; I learned from experience how the mercy of God robs death of its fear.

Rooted in earth as I am, deeply attached to those whom I love in the world, and wretchedly feeble in the love of God, I was not willing to die. That I might die filled me with immeasurable sadness. I could not long for heaven, or even imagine happiness possible without my earthly weaknesses, indulgences and comforts.

But in the crisis I knew that if I had to die, it would not be just *my* dying, alone and desolate, but it would be Christ Who would die my death. With that came the miraculous realization that in the hour of death we shall love God not with our own hearts and minds, but with the heart and the mind and the will of Christ, and with His heart and mind and will we shall long to be with God.

"Into Thy Hands, O Lord . . .!" Christ's prayer is the key to peace, both in living and dying. "Into Thy hands not only my soul and my body, but the lives and the destinies of those whom I love on earth, and whom You, all merciful God, love infinitely more!"

Not into the hands of man, with his blindness, his pride and his folly can we trust our lives or our deaths, but into the hands of God Who is all powerful and all merciful, Who knows every fiber of our being, Who suffers all that we suffer, Who loves everyone whom we love, Whose mercy works all through our lives, and measures sorrow only in that exact measure that is to be balanced by endless joy.

"And mercy is a work that cometh of the goodness of God. And it shall last working as long as sin is suffered to pursue rightful souls: and when sin hath no longer leave to pursue, then shall the working of mercy cease: and then shall all be brought into rightfulness, and therein stand without end" (Juliana of Norwich).

Divine Mercy

WE are indebted to Herbert Schwartz, a Thomist now teaching at Xavier University, Cincinnati, for sharing his insight into the mercy of God.

Herbert Thomas Schwartz: We know by revelation that God is merciful, that He loves us not because we deserve to be loved, that He saves us not because we deserve to be saved; rather we deserve to be loved because *He* loves us, we deserve to be saved because *He* saves us. Mercy, like grace, is something gratuitous, "for nothing."

In that sense mercy is in a way opposed to justice, opposed, that is, in idea, since justice carries the idea of what is due whereas mercy is the giving of what is *not* due. But in God mercy and justice are absolutely one and the same thing, so that it is precisely by His mercy that we are enabled to be just in our relation to Him and to others; it is by the Blood of the Sacred Heart that we can give the Father His due.

beyond faith

But the mercy each one of us needs, although it is known by faith, is not possessed by faith in such a way as to save us. If it were, we would not need the virtue of hope which has the mercy of God for its very object. The mercy each of us needs then, the mercy which saves not merely men in general but *me*, the mercy which is not merely known as something which *can* save but the mercy which *does* save, is something more than mercy as it is possessed in an abstract formulation—although what is formulated is absolutely true. But "when I had gone a little past the keepers of the city I found Him whom my soul loveth." That is to say, when I had gone through faith itself, a little past the truths *as they are possessed by the intellect in faith*, truths guarded by intellect and faith, the "keepers of the city," I found the very Being I love. For what I love is not the formula, although what is formulated is true and the key to the Beloved. But as St. Thomas teaches us, the intellect moves to its object as it is *represented*, where the will (by which we love and hope) goes to the object as it is *in itself*. So that while we must have faith to know the object we love, we must go from the truth as it is limited by our possession of it to the Truth which is God Himself. And therefore we must go a little past the keepers, that is, from God as He is limited by faith, to the Object they keep for us as He is in Himself.

'ye of little faith"

The mercy we need then is divine mercy as we know it in calling out to that mercy, that same mercy to which the disciples called out when they were in the boat and fearful lest they would sink. Reading that gospel, we notice that they called out to the Master in fear, and that they were saved, but not without hearing that bitter rebuke: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?"

The mercy we need, then, is not merely the general and abstract understanding of mercy as a divine attribute, but the personal realization of mercy as something directed to me, mercy as am its object.

Yet the story of the disciples in the boat teaches us that faith is the key to that mercy. For although they did not hope as they should, notice that the disciples were not criticized for being of little hope, but of little faith: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" We may understand this, accordingly, as meaning that the disciples would not have been so fearful in the storm if they had believed as they should. That seems to be the only possible meaning of Our Lord's rebuke.

But the rebuke is still not easy to understand. For after all we do *not* know by faith that we shall be saved. And so, in the storm of our passions it is very easy for us, even while believing, to fear lest we be lost. Why then, "O ye of little faith"? Would I know that I should be saved by having more faith? Certainly my personal salvation is not an article of faith; in fact we are taught that without a special revelation it would be a serious sin of presumption for one to assume that he is to be saved.

Besides it seems strange, does it not, that the disciples should have been criticized for their little faith just when they had cried out in faith for help from the Lord: "Lord, save us, we perish." But maybe this is the point: we notice that the disciples did not say, "Lord, help us, *lest* we perish," but simply, "Lord, help us, we perish." That they cried out to Him thinking they were to perish,



God's Tribunal of Mercy

shows faith; that they thought they would perish crying out to their Lord, shows how little their faith was. But however we interpret the particular words, we may be sure that, since it was God Himself Who rebuked them, the rebuke was not directed to their crying out to their Lord, but to the want of conviction that they would be heard in their crying out. For we notice that only a little before in the same gospel, that same Lord had asked them "What man is there among you of whom, when his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

"To them that ask him." By faith we know that *if* we ask, we shall receive. And indeed in that very place He beseeches His disciples to ask: "Ask and it shall be given to you." But we ask when we believe, and if we do not believe at all we do not ask. And therefore the disciples believed somewhat in asking, but because their faith was small, they did not have much confidence that they would receive what they had asked for. That was why they were rebuked.

the need for hope

The knowledge of God's mercy I need, then, is not the knowledge by which I merely know that God is merciful, but the realization by which I know that He is merciful to me. And that realization I can have only in calling on His mercy. If I do not ask at all, or if in asking I am not confident that I shall receive, my faith is small. By faith I know that if I ask I shall receive; by hope I am confident that I shall receive, more, that I am receiving, in the act of turning to God. But if there is no faith in the truth of God's promises, then what is there to motivate one to actual confidence in His mercy? That is why St. Thomas teaches that in one sense faith must precede hope (since I cannot *hope* that God will give me what He has promised unless I believe that He has promised it); yet, as he explains, it is hope which makes faith perfect, just as hope itself is made perfect in charity. For it is only when one makes acts of confidence in that mercy which he knows by faith, that his faith grows perfect. As St. Thomas says: "Hope is called a beginning of faith . . . because it is through hope that one is brought to the realization of what one believes" (literally, "to the seeing of what is believed"). "Or," he suggests in the same place, "hope may be called a beginning of faith because it is through hope that one is stabilized and perfected in faith."

And so Our Lord rebuked the disciples as of little faith because, although they believed, their faith was small, because it had not been made perfect by hope. As St. Thomas tells us, the act of relying on the mercy of God gives an almost experiential reality to what is believed, we virtually "see" what we believe, he tells us, when we hope.

Confidence in God

It seems that this point of doctrine was so fundamental in Our Lord's teaching that one can scarcely open the gospels without calling on one or another reference to it. Thus in the story of the publican and the pharisee, the poor little publican went into his house justified because he had asked, not asked with his mouth merely—the pharisee had done that too—but in his heart, because in his heart he knew that he was a sinner. And not merely that he was a sinner (for I can know myself a sinner and console myself that there are others at least as bad if not worse), but he was so bowed down by the knowledge of his sin that he could barely lift up his head. But even more important, that overwhelming knowledge of his sin did not prevent him, as it seems to have prevented Judas, from calling on the divine mercy: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!" To ask in this way, then, is to be justified, that is, to be made just. But to ask in sincerity and in truth, two things are necessary: *the knowledge of our own wretchedness*, our hopelessness in ourselves, and *confidence in the mercy of God*.

Thus St. Thomas teaches that we do not pray in order to change the disposition of God (How could we change what is by its very essence unchangeable?) but we pray in order to obtain what God has decreed to give only through the prayers of his saints. Then he goes on to explain that, by asking, men merit to receive what God had decreed to give them from all eternity.

By prayer, that is by asking, we become actually aware of our necessity in relation to God's goodness, and therefore prayer is answered with a kind of inevitability. ("Ask and it shall be given to you.") The inevitability might be compared to the inevitability of water becoming hot when we bring it into contact with the fire. Not just as it is not the fire alone which makes the water hot, but the application of the fire to the water, so it is not the mercy of God alone (saving proportion) which gives us the things necessary for salvation, the actual graces. That mercy to be efficacious, must be applied to our souls. And here the analogy with fire and the heating of water needs to be corrected. For the water does not bring itself into application with the fire, whereas our will does

just that: God's mercy is there—for the asking, and it is the actual asking that makes His mercy actually efficacious. (There is one other needed correction: the fire does not draw the water to itself, but it is through God's mercy that we pray.)

Judas, the pharisee, and the publican

St. Thomas explains too why prayer must be an act of the mind, because it imports the idea of *ordering*, the idea that something is to be brought about by something else, and ordering is as specific and proper to the mind as color is to the eye. More concretely, prayer is that act of the mind whereby we dispose a superior to give us what we know we need. Prayer as it is directed to God (it may be directed to any superior, or even to an equal) presupposes first that we need something and know that we need it and that we can only get it from the one we ask (that is not necessarily true in other kinds of prayer, but it is in prayers directed to God); and second, that He is at once able to give us what we beg and disposed to give it. Applying this to the publican, we can see why he "went into his house justified." He knew his sinfulness to the point of despair in his own powers; and he turned completely to the mercy of God, which we know by faith is at once omnipotent and benevolent. The pharisee turned to God without seeing his own wretchedness, and therefore he was not disposed to receive grace because he really did not want it. Judas, seeing his own wretchedness, turned away from the One Being Who would help him if only he would ask.

Thus there are two ways *not* to receive grace: one, by not knowing how much one needs it, two, by not knowing how much God wants to give. The publican avoided both of these: he went into his house justified because he at once saw his wretchedness and turned to the mercy of God in the knowledge of his wretchedness. His hatred of himself was holy because he saw himself, even as he was hateful, in the light of God's mercy. And because he saw himself in that light, he turned from himself to that light. Whereas Judas hated himself with an unholy hatred because he saw his evil in the corrupt light of his own "goodness." And therefore he destroyed himself when he could see nothing good.

There are many places in Scripture, as I have said, where this same doctrine is taught. There is Our Lord Himself declaring to the pharisee who evidently could not understand His foolishness, that He had come to save sinners. There is the story of the woman taken in adultery. There is the story of Magdalen and Simon, the story of the prodigal son, the parable of the unmerciful servant, the countless miracles making the blind to see, the deaf to hear

the lepers clean, and the almost inevitable "Thy faith hath made thee whole." There is the Magnificat itself, the story of Zacchaeus, the story of the centurion and his "Lord I am not worthy," the story of the Canaanite woman, the woman with the issue of blood, the raising of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. But most outstanding, at least negatively, is the example of the pharisees.

the pharisee in each of us

I think it no accident that there is so much of the pharisee in the gospels. The reason, I think, is that everyone, in so far as he is not perfect, is something of a pharisee. For to be perfect is to see oneself as God sees one, and to love oneself as God loves. But God sees each of us in Himself, as His work, and He loves us for the goodness which He created in creating us. Whatever does not come from Him, then, is not lovable to God. In fact whatever does not come from God is *sin*. But we, in our impurity, think that there is some goodness in us which did not come from God, and consequently our love of ourselves is impure and unholy. That is why we are so confused by any sign of our weakness, either actual sin or the mere proneness to it. We look upon our weakness as an obstacle to grace because we have a mistaken notion of our self-sufficiency. But we know that God deliberately permitted sin to come into the world so that, in the language of St. Paul, where sin abounded grace would more abound.

Certainly we should be sorry for our sins, in fact we must be in order to be forgiven. But perfect contrition is sorrow for our sins, not because they have offended us, but because they have offended *God*. And so it is possible to be, in a sense, too sorry for one's sins, to be sorry as Judas was sorry, sorry for our sins without seeing the mercy of God. If we are sorry as we should be, then we realize God's love for us in the knowledge of our own malice. We are "forgiven much because we love much." And we love much because we know how much we are loved in knowing how much we are forgiven: "He to whom little is forgiven, loves little."

Simon and Magdalen

The point is that Mary Magdalen did not merely know God as One Who forgives sin; Simon knew that too, we may presume; she saw God as He forgave her *her* sins. The living actuality of God's mercy was as it moved her to see His mercy *to her*, so that we may say that His grace was, so to speak, pouring in simultaneously as her tears were pouring out.

It was just this that Simon could not see; that was why he said to himself: "This man, were he a prophet, would surely know

who and what manner of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." That was precisely what Jesus did know. He had come to save sinners, but Simon would not have thought what he did unless he had assumed that he was *not* a sinner. And so Our Lord had to tell him that "he to whom little is forgiven, loves little." Not that there was little to be forgiven in Simon. (Who would say that his pride was a lesser sin than Magdalen's impurity?) But little had been forgiven; else he would have loved much, and if he loved much he would have been forgiven much.

But like us his peace and security are mostly in the conviction of his own goodness. *It is that conviction which prevents us from letting God apply His grace to our souls.* We do not ask for mercy because we are afraid to see how much we need it. And thus, like Simon, we are scandalized by sinners. Like the pharisee in the synagogue we pray to God asking Him to give us the things we have without Him; we pray for things so long as we see them within our own self-sufficiency. But then we are not asking God; we are telling Him how nice we are to be praying even when we do not need His help—because "it is the right thing to do." And so we do not receive much because we do not ask for much. For God, as we can scarcely understand, is utterly simple; He gives us just as much as we ask for. And we cannot ask for much without seeing how much we need, without carrying the burden of our sins: "Unless you pick up your cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple."

afraid to face ourselves

I think this is close to the heart of the matter. It is God's device to teach us through our sins how much we depend on Him, how hopeless we are without Him. Sin in God's intention (He only *permits* it, but He permits it for a purpose) is ultimately a stratagem whereby He would dispose us to the grace He wants to give. But the effect of sin, in itself as opposed to God's intention, is to make us doubt His love and mercy. It seems that we are afraid to face what we are (without which we cannot ask for help), because we are afraid of despair. In some way we sense that if we really saw ourselves as we were we would lose all hope. Remember that our first parents hid from God after they had sinned—rather they hid God from themselves. And we are their children. Now surely this happened to them to teach us the effect of sin, that it causes us to disbelieve the mercy of God, to see Him only as a just avenger.

That must be why we were given another mother, so that we might be born again of one who did not hide from God. For

just as Eve (and her husband) hid from God after their seduction by the bad angel, Mary, hearing the message through the good angel, says: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." The children of Eve cannot ask for mercy because they do not believe it—that is the effect of sin. But Mary asks mercy for us, and obtains it. That must be why she is called the "Mother of fair hope." That too would explain why we must see God with Mary's eyes to know His mercy: "How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou! thy eyes are doves' eyes, besides what is hid within." "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."



The Lost Individual

THE QUEST FOR COMMUNITY

By Robert A. Nisbet

Oxford University Press, \$5.00

"I think that the species of oppression by which democratic nations are menaced is unlike anything that ever before existed

in the world. . . . The first thing that strikes the observation is an innumerable multitude of men, all equal and alike, incessantly endeavouring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives. Each of them, living apart, is a stranger to the fate of all the rest; his children and his private friends constitute to him the whole of mankind. As for the rest of his fellow citizens, he is close to them, but he does not see them; he exists only in himself, and for himself alone; and if his kindred still remain to him, he may be said at any rate to have lost his country.

"Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratification and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild . . . it every day renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent; it circumscribes the will within a narrower range and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself. The principle of equality has prepared men for these things; it has predisposed men to endure them as benefits.

"After having thus successively taken each member of the community in its powerful grasp and fashioned him at will, the supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community. It covers the surface of society with a network of small, complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not to be shattered, but softened, bent and guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly refrained from acting. Such power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals of which the government is the shepherd.

"I have always thought that servitude of the regular, quiet, and gentle kind which I have just described might be combined more easily than is commonly believed with some of the outward forms of freedom, and that it might even establish itself under the wing of the sovereignty of the people."

The date is 1840; the writer Tocqueville reflecting on his travels in America. Professor Nisbet uses the quotation at length now to introduce the chapter on "The Total Community," perhaps the finest chapter of his fine book. In fact it describes the focus of the whole: the danger of an ever growing, ever more omniverous, eventually all-powerful state emerging from our disintegrating culture and society.

Tocqueville's premonitions have come to pass even in some Western countries and fearfully near to pass in others. Nation-wide, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were only the most obviously sick. At the personal, family

and community levels—and this is where the rot starts—the signs of loosening social ties are clear for all to see: the unknown and probably unbefriended neighbor, the old couple living on their own, the divorced man at work, the salesman who finally committed suicide, the weary happiness faces in the subway, the hospital in the suburbs full of mentally and emotionally disturbed. Professor Nisbet draws the signs together with particular reference to America. He shows how general they are: for every nine couples married now, one couple get divorced; out of every five persons one will at the present rate be in a mental hospital at some time or other during his lifetime; the aged have become a recognized problem for innumerable welfare agencies.

It is individuals who are sick and who suffer but it is the society in which they live which provides the setting. And in this society men, women and children have increasing difficulty in finding friends, having things in common and doing things together, in discovering purpose and leading meaningful lives. So that the friendless neighbor points to the restless shifting and changing of the modern town, the neglected old people to failures in the modern family, the divorced worker to hurried marriages.

In the political sphere, and this is Professor Nisbet's special concern, what lessons are to be learned from the restless returned serviceman nostalgic for the comradeship and well-worn grooves of military formation or from the serious-minded young men and women who prefer the social ostracism and strenuous labor which go with devotion to communism to the comforts of bourgeois society? "The Marxian thesis has duly evolved its antithesis: materialism has given them souls; determinism has freed their wills. For the first time they 'belong' to something, to a 'cause' good or bad as it may be, but something at any rate which transcends their narrow personal interests and opens up a world in which each has his part to play and all 'can pull together.'" Totalitarianism has only two essential elements. Masses of lonely, autonomous and dispirited individuals are the first. An ideology of the political state is the second. Then, as Walter Lippman once said about cultured, bourgeois Germany replete with Christian tradition, the people may be so frightened that they allow themselves to be manacled to prevent their hands from shaking.

Professor Nisbet sees the problem and the focus of attention in the failure of modern industrial society to allow and encourage well-functioning local institutions which are small and meaningful enough to capture the loyalty and enthusiasm of men and women and give moral cohesion to the framework of the larger society and to the state. Such institutions existed in profusion when the philosophers and political architects of individualism began to express the yearning for greater personal freedom. Either they declared themselves against them or they took their continuance for granted. Protestantism magnified the individual and played down (or out) the institutional and communal dimensions of the Church. "Whole systems of economic, religious and intellectual freedom were founded on the assumption that the essence of human behaviour lies in what is *within* man, not in what exists between man and his institutions . . . the founders of liberalism abstracted certain moral and psychological attributes from a social organisation and considered these the timeless natural qualities of the *individual* who was regarded as independent of the influences of any

historically developed social organisation." The social organization was destroyed or just atrophied in disuse. In the larger cities the majority of people no longer belong to a club or a voluntary association of any kind. Protestant thinkers of the standing of Buber, Demant and Niebuhr are reemphasizing the institutional aspect of religion. (Meanwhile the suicide rate among Protestants is higher than the rate among Catholics but Protestants are also wealthier!) Economists find that the "economic man" whose behavior they analyzed and used as basis for elaborate theories worked and saved for his home and children and that when these fade out from the moral vision of businessmen, "economic man" behaves quite differently. Incentives have become a problem.

And so the simple optimism of the nineteenth century and the age of progress has disappeared. Then such words as *individual, change, progress, reason, and freedom* were in use everywhere and symbolized strong convictions. They have been replaced by *disorganization, uniformity, decline, insecurity, breakdown, instability*. "Not the free individual but the lost individual; not independence but isolation; not self-discovery but self-obsession; not to conquer but to be conquered: these are major states of mind in contemporary imaginative literature" and in many other areas of thought which until recently stressed totally different conceptions of the nature of man. Professor Nisbet concludes that all efforts be concentrated on building the intermediate associations which prevent social sickness and protect people from the all-powerful state. The words for this endeavor are *integration, status, group, hierarchy, identification, norm* and the like. The pendulum of human affairs has swung right back and, having overshoot its mark in the other direction, will in due time no doubt draw new champions for individualism.

The book says nothing about how this quest for community is to be met or even started. Voluntary associations are easily destroyed as the dictators have shown; to destroy them has invariably been very high on their program for the occupation of a new country. They are difficult to build; backbreaking to start, slow to progress, unspectacular, subject to disappointments and failures. If Professor Nisbet had concerned himself with this he might have gone on to differentiate between small groups, associations and institutions of which several and a diversity make up a community. To me community implies something larger, more balanced and more pervasive than a small group; and it is with small groups that the start must be made. I am not sure of the value of the insistence to pinpoint "the developing concentration of function and power of the sovereign political state" as "the greatest single influence upon social organization in the modern West." The interrelations seem to me manifold and very complex; and if the proposition led to the idea that rebuilding the social fabric is dependent on changing the influence of the political state it might result in putting the cart before the horse. What the book is to be recommended for is its wide sweep through theology, history, the arts and the social sciences from which Professor Nisbet focusses on an essential part of the problems of the mid-twentieth century, and this with admirable clarity. For the reader who likes the sweeping thought this is a book of distinction. Those who are looking for guides to immediate action will have to look elsewhere.

ROLF LYNTON

The Continuity of Human History

MEDIEVAL ESSAYS
By Christopher Dawson
Sheed & Ward, \$3.50

Unlike many historians, Christopher Dawson is a citizen of his own age, not of a past or future one. This saves him from sentimentality on the one hand, and from despair on the other. And it has helped him produce a body of work which for range and cohesion, for containment of vision and soberness of thought, is rare in this day of intellectual adventuring. For truly to know and love history requires a steadfast commitment to and acceptance of one's own time; but also requires humility and loyalty—to the dead and the unborn. We are neither more nor less fortunate than our ancestors were or our descendants will be. We have to meet our responsibilities as they had and all have to meet theirs. But to do this means to live without nostalgia or anxiety, and it means above all to have a clear knowledge of the past, because our responsibility was born before we ourselves were. This is what human history announces: that we are not products but inheritors, that most of what we possess was possessed before us and transmitted, and that we spend our treasure wisely or in waste.

It is with this fruitful conception of the past—under its own pressures, tempted and succumbing, faithful and persevering, bequeathing all—that Mr. Dawson carries on his work as historian of religion and culture. His *Making of Europe* and *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* were masterpieces of discovery and synthesis of the significant, the enduring elements which have gone into the making of Western society. And these, he left us in no doubt, are to be found in just what modern man is accustomed to explain by everything except them. The economic, the political and social are not Mr. Dawson's ultimate objects of study, for they are not the ultimate truth about a society. It is through what has been struck off in the spirit and in the creative will (like medals that commemorate and preserve) that a people and an age may be known. This is not to leave politics and economics aside; it is to see them in position, proportion and relationship. And in Mr. Dawson's book he again turns his immense learning, his catholicity, and his unrivalled sense of the continuity of human history to such an ordering.

The book is a collection of twelve essays, half of which were published some years ago under the title *Medieval Religion*. They range from a fresh analysis of the fall of the Roman Empire to a vigorous rescue and allegory of *Piers Plowman*. One chapter called "The Sociological Foundations of Medieval Christendom" is a matchless example of Mr. Dawson's power to fuse and make whole. In it he brilliantly destroys the myth of the Middle Ages as a time of blind obedience and ignorant submission, and reveals it for what it so passionately was: a period of intense spiritual struggle and social change, a time when the animating spirit of Christianity came into contact with and steadily transformed the youthful peoples of the West.

In other chapters he discusses medieval science, literature and theology with an almost unerring capacity for distinguishing the new from the old, the useful from the merely impressive, the continuing from the still-born. His essay on the Church-State development during the one thousand years from Rome to the Reformation makes most such studies seem partisan

and feverish. And his emphasis in many of the essays on the debt of the Christian West to the Moslem East comes as a long-delayed recognition.

What is perhaps his deepest concern, a theme that one finds stressed in all his work, is the question of European unity and disintegration. Whatever Christendom was within itself, however it fell short of true unity, the very word captures a reality: there was a time before the rise of strictly defined national states when Europe was Catholic, integral and under a common code and dream. That the destruction of this community is its most complete has never deterred Mr. Dawson from working for its resurrection within the new form it would have to take. In this book the comments are implicit mostly, woven into the text, but they are as pointed as ever, and we cannot afford to ignore them.

There is one aspect of the book which may disturb some readers. That is Mr. Dawson's habit of citing names—of people and movements—which in their profusion sometimes threaten to overwhelm one. It may be that he presupposes a greater familiarity with the period than most of us have. But it may also be that he simply cannot withhold a reference he feels should already be in a common framework. If we haven't erected such a structure, we could begin now to set about it.

To take to heart these words of his might help us to master our inertia: "For the modern Christian the advantages of this study (of Christian history and culture) are obvious since it is the study of his own spiritual tradition. Without it he will suffer from a sense of cultural inferiority and estrangement in the modern world, and the more attached he is to his religion, the greater will be the danger of his adopting a negative sectarian attitude which will narrow his sympathies and contract his social activities."

As long as there are such minds as his patiently tending the life-line to the past, we have protection against this baffling us.

RICHARD GILMAN

Guardini at his Very Good

THE LAST THINGS
By Romano Guardini
Pantheon, \$2.75

Having read *The Death of Socrates*, *The Church and the Catholic*, and *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, also by Msgr. Guardini, I expect great things of this book. The others were books which the reader had often to put down in order to absorb the new and exciting insights into shopworn truths which Msgr. Guardini excelled in presenting. Such is not the case here. *The Last Things* reads rather like an assignment which the author had to produce, as if he said to himself, "Hmm, let's see now. Death . . . what shall I write about that?"

He, as the title indicates, deals with death, punishment following resurrection, the general and particular judgments, and man's life in eternity. On all of them he is lucid, and from anyone else this would be acceptable; but he has spoiled us in the past, and we continue to expect a surpassing performance from him.

However, although not Guardini-at-his-best, this book is Guardini-at-his-very-good. Discussing death, he brings out the dying our physical nature undergoes from the moment of birth. "Childhood," he says, "in any way a complete life in itself, perishes to make way for youth, and youth comes to an end at maturity. . . . So different are these various portions of our lives that often we cannot think ourselves back into our own past."

something has died." He touches on the "will to die" which causes some alienate friends, to hurt themselves, to tear down their own work, seemingly inexplicably; and on the death in life that comes, for example, to some mothers when their children are grown and have no further need of them, or to a man retired from a business which was his whole reason for being. He comments on the perennially lighthearted way in which modern man regards, if indeed he regards at all, the questions of eternity and eternal destiny. "It often seems as though the more nearly things approach the center of reality, the lighter they weigh with him."

An interesting chapter deals with "The Spiritual Body." Even on earth it has its beginnings. "The face of a man who is passionately searching for truth is not only more 'spiritual' than that of the man with a dulled mind, it is also more of a face, that is to say, it is more genuinely, more intensively 'body.'" Msgr. Guardini feels that recent research in psychosomatic medicine proves how completely the body is at the disposal of the spirit. "What, then, will not be possible," he asks, "when eternity breaks to time and when divine strength and holiness hold unrestricted sway, setting the spirit free in its absolute purity and power?"

Discussing "The Nature of History," he points out that history shows that the higher the good, the less it imposes itself, that only in fairy tales does Prince Charming carry off the maiden, does right triumph because it is right. Yet in every man there is a passion to see justice done; it is obviously not always done in this life; so history points to a judgment, equalization after death, and a judgment, moreover, that will be manifest to all; in short, to the general judgment, to which man unaided could not aspire, which will show the measure of each man's love, his relationship to Christ.

In his chapter on "Purgatory" Msgr. Guardini seems to say some strange things, and I wonder if it can be the translation which is at fault. He must not busy ourselves with "helping" those in purgatory, he says. Of course, we should feel concern for our brothers and sisters who are enduring the pains of penance, but we should not show it, as it were, by giving them alms, not by practicing some kind of devotion here which could be accredited to them beyond the grave." This seems at variance with Catholic teaching; however, he apparently contradicts himself in his next sentence, for he goes on to say, "We should know about them in the flesh, stand by them lovingly, implore the Holy Ghost to draw them into the beginning of transformation and to establish them in holiness." To implore the Holy Ghost" seems but another way of "practicing some kind of devotion"!

One more point. In his discussion of eternity, Msgr. Guardini deprecates the debasement of the true meaning of the word and goes on to say in a general way, "When a word decays it is not merely that we become uncertain of each other's meaning. . . . A light has been extinguished and our intellectual day is made darker. To restore to its original meaning a word that is being destroyed by careless use is a service to the whole human life." How I disagree! The only static language is a dead language. To my mind, words *should* alter their meaning, the precise meaning of intention they express, and these changes are one of the delights of language, a sign of life, not of decay.

PATRICIA MCGOWAN

When is a Novel Moral?

NORMS FOR THE NOVEL
By Harold C. Gardiner, S.J.
The America Press, \$2.00

This interesting and already popular work by Father Gardiner is designed as a guide to Catholics who read and who review novels—especially Catho-

lic novels; only by indirection could you say that the book is intended for the writer of the novel.

The aspect of the novel which interests and concerns Father Gardiner is, of course, its moral tone and aim. And it is to make it clear just what one may and may not demand, in this respect, from a novel, and how one should and should not judge the integrity of the novelist, that he writes this book. If you expect to find a point of view that is narrow and reactionary in Father Gardiner, you will at once change your mind, for he is extremely frank, honest, and liberal in his judgments.

You may gather some notion of the trend of the book from reading the table of contents; the first section, "Five Principles of Moral Evaluation," is divided thus: 1. The norm of objective charity. 2. Objectionable parts and total effect. 3. Recognition of sin for what it is. 4. Detailed description of sin. 5. Fiction and the art of living.

His direct, common-sense approach can be seen from the following paragraph: "...the question of how far sin can legitimately be made attractive in a novel. It perhaps ought to be noted here by way of parenthesis and as a theological basis for what is to follow, that sin *is* attractive. If it were not, no sin would ever be committed, for, as the moralists tell us, sin is never committed because it is sinful, but because it elicits our consent *sub specie boni*. . . . But how far that attractiveness may be made vivid in the pages of a book is something else again. It has to be made vivid enough to portray the characters as being sufficiently swayed to yield to it. But it cannot be made so attractive that the reader, in his turn, is so swayed by the attractiveness as to have his judgment warped and his conduct misdirected."

Speaking of the necessity of a mature reading public, he finds that Catholics generally are very immature in this respect: "But it is to be feared that all too many readers (and particularly Catholic readers...) are under the impression that any novel which stirs up their thinking, gives them some new insights and approaches, sets before them a puzzle without providing easily applied solutions—in a word, which challenges the status quo—is bad because it is disturbing."

Father Gardiner builds up the argument of the book very carefully to the conclusion that all literature, although primarily designed to give pleasure, is inevitably moral and even religious, due to the nature of man as an animal with an immortal soul; and that any novel is only a good novel if it shows humanity in its true light. I say he builds up the thesis of the book carefully; so carefully that you do not suspect at first that he is leading to a neat Thomistic conclusion—for he never uses unnecessarily technical language, and never spoils the fun by telling you in advance all that he is going to prove. You can therefore have great sport along the way in denouncing him, only to find by the end of the book that he has satisfied all your objections.

A. P. CAMPBELL

Great Jewish Convert

BEFORE THE DAWN
By Eugenio Zolli
Sheed & Ward, \$3.25

Rabbi Zolli's conversion is, humanly speaking, the most important Jewish conversion in many decades; certainly the one most talked about by Jewish people. His story

is surely worth the telling.

"Did you become a convert out of gratitude toward the Pope, who did so much for the Jews of Italy during the Nazi persecution?" This is one of the most frequent questions put to Mr. Zolli, and one which he answers definitively in this book. First of all, he makes it clear that the solicitude of the Holy Father for the Jews during the Nazi occupation of Rome was real, material, and extensive. Secondly, he makes it clear that it had no part in his conversion.

Except in the case of St. Paul and some others, men make their decisions about God in about the same way they make other very important decisions in their lives. If they are scholarly, discursive souls, no doubt they walk thoughtfully, with grace, to God. For impulsive, intuitive souls, it is probably more of a leap, with grace, to Him. For Rabbi Zolli, profound student of Scripture and Semitic cultures, it was a gradual, ever-deepening insight into the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments, between Judaism and its unfolding—the Christ.

By study and by love, the student and the lover drew nigh the Teacher, the Master, Who was Love. "I began to feel more and more keenly the desire to find someone who would speak to me of the God of Love, the God who loves all without distinction and desires that the bonds which unite men should be those of love. . . . The man who loves, says St. Thomas Aquinas, tries to become more and more assimilated to the object of his love. And I loved Jesus; I loved Him ever increasingly." So he describes his state just prior to his conversion.

In somewhat the same way as the Old Testament prepares the way for the New, Dr. Zolli's childhood in a deeply religious Jewish home prepared him for the grace of faith. His mother is obviously a saint to him, and his acquired knowledge of Christian spirituality confirms rather than diminishes her stature. Some of the most touching passages of the book are to be found in the opening chapters where he describes Jewish life in the Central European community of the last generation.

The book also provides an explanation—complete, even to documentary evidence provided in an appendix—of Dr. Zolli's personal behavior during the Nazi occupation. Some officials in Italian Jewish society have, in recent years, questioned his actions. Providentially, there is sufficient witness, not only to his practical wisdom in emergencies, but also to his heroism. Chief Rabbi Zolli had volunteered to head any list of hostages, should the Nazis demand them. But the book is not a legal defense of his position—intellectual, political, and religious. It is a beautiful, deeply emotional confession of what he loves best in the world—the Jewish people, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Person of Jesus Christ.

MICHAEL DAVID

For A Prayer to Our Lady, Health of the Sick, send self-addressed envelope to Mother Mary Angela, Vista Maria, Cragmoor, N. Y.

BOOK NOTES

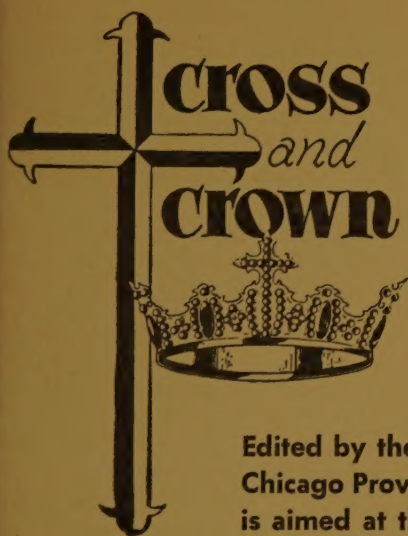
We guess that anyone who's had a spiritual director has read Marmion and therefore will be interested in this latest published, particularly rich volume of his works—*The Trinity in Our Spiritual Life* (edited by Dom Raymund Thibaut, Newman, \$3.50). In it he unfolds, sometimes through straight doctrine, at other times through prayer, his special understanding of the relationship of the soul with each member of the Blessed Trinity. This book can't be taken in big gulps, but in small doses it supplies tremendous food for thought and prayer.—Joan Gregory.

Reading *Come, Holy Ghost* by Bishop Francis Xavier Ford, M.C. Mullen, \$1.50) is a lovely experience. Bishop Ford (who died, incidentally, a year ago in a Chinese communist prison of "old age") has his eye especially on his missionaries-religious, but you don't have to be either one or the other to find him bringing you to address the Spirit of Love immediately and informally as the closest of Friends. Bishop Ford shows us in concrete terms how the Holy Ghost renews the earth as the kingdom of God by recreating His love in each of our souls; he also shows, with most loving humor, how we are able—and even quite likely—to avoid getting enkindled by our dearest Friend's fires.—Nell Sonnemann

The Wife Desired by Leo J. Kinsella (Paluck, \$.70) is written in a popular style; nevertheless, except that I was reviewing it, I should never have persevered to the end. The reason it failed to hold my interest is its lack of depth; too often the "meat" I was looking for in a particular chapter was tacked on in a few words at the end. A very undesirable feature of the book is the author's obvious lack of understanding of women. For the most part his examples are taken from the cases with which he deals as a priest assigned to the marriage court. He is too unfamiliar with the ways and thinking of the average woman in her everyday life to offer the kind of concrete examples that drive an idea home to her whether she is married or single.—Edwina Hearn Froehlich

The Sun Her Mantle by John Beevers (Newman, \$3.25) is an account of the nine public visits of Our Lady to earth since 1830. While those apparitions at Lourdes and Fatima are most familiar to us, Our Lady's visits to La Salette, Knock, Banneux, etc., are especially worth learning about during the Marian year. Mr. Beevers writes well, and his handling of the La Salette apparitions and their aftermath is especially skillful. (The two children's later lives were rather questionable; they didn't become saints, like Bernadette of Lourdes or Catherine Labouré. But that shouldn't scandalize; rather it should straighten out our thinking on the relative unimportance of seeing visions of Our Lady.)—D. D.

It is well over a year since the apostolic constitution *Christus Dominus* liberalizing the conditions for the Eucharistic fast, was issued. Yet one wonders how many of the people legitimately entitled to dispensations have availed themselves of them. One hopes that *The New Eucharistic Legislation*, an explanation and practical application of the apostolic constitution, by John C. Ford, S.J. (Kenedy, \$1.50) will be read by many priests who will use the knowledge it contains to enlighten the faithful who are still pretty much in the dark regarding these new and great laws.—D. D.



A Quarterly Review of Spiritual Theology

Edited by the Dominican Fathers of the
Chicago Province, **CROSS AND CROWN**
is aimed at the discriminating tastes of
priests, religious and educated laity. . . .

Published in March, June, September and December,
the magazine presents in a non-technical, yet thorough
manner the vital truths necessary to the development of
a full Christian life. No serious minded Catholic can afford
to be without it.

A subscription to this interesting and thought-provoking
magazine will make a wonderful gift for a newly-ordained
priest, a nun making her reception or profession, a student
being graduated from college—or any Catholic with more
than an ordinary interest in ascetical and mystical values.

A one-year subscription to this unique quarterly costs
\$4.00 in the U. S. and Canada, \$4.50 in foreign countries;
a two-year subscription in the U. S. and Canada costs \$7.00,
\$8.00 in foreign countries.

At Your Bookseller or from

B. HERDER BOOK CO., Publishers

15 & 17 S. Broadway, St. Louis 2, Mo.



Our Lady of the Broom

The large and lovely lessons
You taught with little breath
In the liturgy of labor
In the house at Nazareth
Are such fantastic simple things
That mortals may presume
To call the Queen of Seraphim
Our Lady of the Broom.

For you who rule the angels
Built up our legacy
By living a life of little things
That we do every day.
You cooked, cleaned, washed and mended,
Scrubbed the kitchen floor,
Teaching a world the woman's way
To worship and adore.

How beautifully you taught us
Where all perfection lies
By seeing all salvation in
The work before your eyes,
Immensity in little space
The world in the humble room
You swept and kept and cared for,
Our Lady of the Broom.

drawing by Ed Wilcox
verses by J. G. Shaw

Copies of the picture and poem **OUR LADY OF THE BROOM** are still available. Since it first appeared in the **INTEGRITY** issue, **MORE ABOUT MARY**, there has been such demand for it that we made reprints. For readers who would like to use it as a kitchen prayer, it is available in two sizes:

Small size (3 by 5 inches).....10 cents
(5 cents for orders of ten or more)

Large size (8½ by 11 inches).....25 cents
(15 cents for orders of ten or more)

We still have some copies of our issue **MORE ABOUT MARY**, at 25 cents. It features articles by Eithne Tabor on "Mother of the Mentally Ill" and Mary Reed Newland's "Children and the Imitation of Mary."

Please enclose payment with order.